

(3) The advisory council shall meet no less than three times annually. The terms of council members shall be staggered and for 4 years except that any member appointed to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term shall serve for the remainder of such term. A member who has been appointed for a term of 4 years may not be reappointed to the council during the 2-year period beginning on the date on which such 4-year term expired.

(c) Each P&A system shall provide its advisory council with reports, materials and fiscal data to enable review of existing program policies, priorities and performance outcomes. Such submissions shall be made at least annually and shall report expenditures for the past two fiscal years, as well as projected expenses for the next fiscal year, identified by budget category (e.g., salary and wages, contract for services, administrative expenses) including the amount allotted for training of each the advisory council, governing board and staff.

(d) Reimbursement of expenses. (1) Allotments may be used to pay for all or a part of the expenses incurred by members of the advisory council in order to participate in its activities. Expenses may include transportation costs, parking, meals, hotel costs, per diem expenses, stipends or subsistence allowances, and the cost of day care or child care (or its equivalent for the child's travel and subsistence expenses) for their dependents with mental illness or developmental disabilities.

(2) Each P&A system shall establish its own policies and procedures for reimbursement of expenses of council members, taking into account the needs of individual council members, available resources, and applicable restrictions on use of grant funds, including the restrictions in §§ 51.31(e) and 51.6(e).

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 62 FR 53564, Oct. 15, 1997, § 51.23 was added. This section contains information collection and record-keeping requirements and will not become effective until approval has been given by the Office of Management and Budget.

#### § 51.24 Program priorities.

(a) Program priorities and policies shall be established annually by the

governing authority, jointly with the advisory council. Priorities shall specify short-term program goals and objectives, with measurable outcomes, to implement the established priorities. In developing priorities, consideration shall be given to, at a minimum, case selection criteria, the availability of staff and monetary resources, and special problems and cultural barriers faced by individuals with mental illness who are multiply handicapped or who are members of racial or ethnic minorities in obtaining protection of their rights. Systemic and legislative activities shall also be addressed in the development and implementation of program priorities.

(b) Members of the public shall be given an opportunity, on an annual basis, to comment on the priorities established by, and the activities of, the P&A system. Procedures for public comment must provide for notice in a format accessible to individuals with mental illness, including such individuals who are in residential facilities, to family members and representatives of such individuals and to other individuals with disabilities. Procedures for public comment must provide for receipt of comments in writing or in person.

#### § 51.25 Grievance procedure.

(a) The P&A system shall establish procedures to address grievances from:

(1) Clients or prospective clients of the P&A system to assure that individuals with mental illness have full access to the services of the program; and

(2) Individuals who have received or are receiving mental health services in the State, family members of such individuals, or representatives of such individuals or family members to assure that the eligible P&A system is operating in compliance with the Act.

(b) At a minimum, the grievance procedures shall provide for:

(1) An appeal to the governing authority from any final staff review and/or determination; in cases where the governing authority is the director of the P&A system, the final review and/or determination shall be made by a superior of the governing authority, e.g., a supervisor, or by an independent

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entity, e.g., an appointed board or committee.

(2) Reports, at least annually, to the governing authority and the advisory council describing the grievances received and processed and their resolution;

(3) Identification of individuals responsible for review;

(4) A timetable to ensure prompt notification concerning the grievance procedure to clients, prospective clients or persons denied representation, and to ensure prompt resolution;

(5) A written response to the grievant; and

(6) Protection of client confidentiality.

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 62 FR 53564, Oct. 15, 1997, §51.25 was added. This section contains information collection and record-keeping requirements and will not become effective until approval has been given by the Office of Management and Budget.

### **§51.26 Conflicts of interest.**

The P&A system must develop appropriate policies and procedures to avoid actual or apparent conflict of interest involving clients, employees, contractors and subcontractors, and members of the governing authority and advisory council, particularly with respect to matters affecting client services, particular contracts and subcontracts, grievance review procedures, reimbursements and expenses, and the employment or termination of staff.

### **§51.27 Training.**

A P&A system shall provide training for program staff, and may also provide training for contractors, governing board and advisory council members to enhance the development and implementation of effective protection and advocacy services for individuals with mental illness, including at a minimum:

(a)(1) Training of program staff to work with family members of clients served by the program where the individual with mental illness is:

(i) A minor,

(ii) Legally competent and chooses to involve the family member; or

(iii) Legally incompetent and the legal guardian, conservator or other

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legal representative is a family member.

(2) This training may be provided by individuals who have received or are receiving mental health services and family members of such individuals.

(b) Training to enhance sensitivity to and understanding of individuals with mental illness who are members of racial or ethnic minorities and to develop strategies for outreach to those populations.

(c) Training to conduct full investigations of abuse or neglect.

### **§§ 51.28–51.30 [Reserved]**

## **Subpart C—Protection and Advocacy Services**

### **§51.31 Conduct of protection and advocacy activities.**

(a) Consistent with State and Federal law and the canons of professional ethics, a P&A system may use any appropriate technique and pursue administrative, legal or other appropriate remedies to protect and advocate on behalf of individuals with mental illness to address abuse, neglect or other violations of rights.

(b) A P&A system shall establish policies and procedures to guide and coordinate advocacy activities. The P&A system shall not implement a policy or practice restricting the remedies which may be sought on behalf of individuals with mental illness or compromising the authority of the P&A system to pursue such remedies through litigation, legal action or other forms of advocacy. However, this requirement does not prevent the P&A system from placing limitations on case or client acceptance criteria developed as part of the annual priorities. Prospective clients must be informed of any such limitations at the time they request service.

(c) Wherever possible, the program should establish an ongoing presence in residential mental health care or treatment facilities, and relevant hospital units.

(d) Program activities should be carried out in a manner which allows program staff to: